(b) whether Government is itself carrying on any research in the field of cold fusion or encouraging other national or university laboratories to conduct research in the said field; and

(c) if so, how much amount has been earmarked by Government for the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE (SHRI PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN): (a) In a few countries like USA and Japan, work related to this area is being pursued more as a curiosity driven science research programme.

(b) No Sir. Several research groups in Department of Atomic Energy and other university laboratories' pursued research in this area in 1990s. They could not obtain reproducible results to establish the phenomenon of 'Cold Fusion'. Currently very few groups are working in this area.

(c) Not applicable.

Employment for disabled persons

*413. SHRI BHAGAT SINGH KOSHYARI: Will the Minister of SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT be pleased to state:

(a) the total number of beneficiaries under the National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People (NCPEDP) during the Eleventh Plan period;

(b) the details thereof;

(c) whether the NCPEDP has achieved its goal; if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken by his Ministry?

THE MINISTER OF SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EMPOWERMENT (SHRI MUKUL WASNIK): (a) to (d) As National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People is not a government organization and is not receiving any financial assistance from the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment the information is not available with the Ministry.

Housing for rising population

*414. SHRI VIJAY JAWAHARLAL DARDA:
SHRI N K SINGH:
Will the Minister of HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether in view of growing need of housing for the rising population, there is a need to develop more townships to accommodate them;

(b) if so, whether the experts have sought the intervention of Government to help develop the micro-financing sector and make land available to private developers; and

(c) if so, the action plan formulated by Government to build low cost housing sectors in cities?

THE MINISTER OF HOUSING AND URBAN POVERTY ALLEVIATION (KUMARI SELJA): (a) The National Urban Housing & Habitat Policy, 2007 advocates that in order to improve the quality of life in urban areas, it is of critical significance that the housing stock is improved through urban renewal, in situ slum improvement and development of new housing stock in existing cities as well as new townships.

(b) The High Level Task Force under the Chairmanship of Chairman, Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited (HDFC) on 'Affordable Housing for All' while examining the issue of fiscal and financial framework for affordable housing has observed that there are few institutions that are systematically giving affordable loans, especially to slum dwellers. The Task Force has proposed the need for a housing finance company whose main focus will be on micro-housing loans. It has also recommended strengthening of existing institutions through support and up scaling by effecting changes in the existing regulations that constrain their operations.

The Task Force has noted that additional lands will need to be brought in for meeting the housing needs and land requirements of other sectors and recommended simplification of the procedures and processes for bringing in additional lands into the market; review the process of Master Planning and effecting changes as necessary for making a proper assessment of land requirements; and allocation of such lands for different uses, including land for affordable housing. The Task force has further suggested that "affordable housing" be treated a 'public purpose'.

The Task Force has recommended upward revision of Floor Area Ratio (FAR)/Floor Space Index (FSI) across cities of different sizes commensurate with investment in infrastructure that it will necessitate. The Task Force has further recommended *in situ* development via security of tenure for those living in such settlements.

(c) 'Land' and 'Colonisation' being State subjects, it is primarily the responsibility of State Governments to provide for adequate Shelter at affordable cost. However, the Union Government has formulated the first urban area focused National Urban Housing & Habitat Policy, 2007 to set in motion a process in providing 'Affordable Housing for All' particularly the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG). This policy intends to promote sustainable development of habitat in the country with a view to ensuring equitable supply of land, shelter and services at affordable prices to all sections of society.

Apart from this, Jawaharlal Nehru National Urban Renewal Mission (JNNURM), launched by the Government in the year 2005 caters to provision of housing and basic services to urban poor in 65 specified cities under the Sub Mission Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) and in other cities and towns under the Integrated Housing and Slum Development Programme (IHSDP). A total of 462 projects under Basic Services to the Urban Poor (BSUP) and 842 projects under Integrated Housing & Slum Development Programme (IHSDP) have been approved all over the country so far envisaging construction/upgradation of 995183 and 464089 dwelling units respectively.

A new scheme - Interest Subsidy Scheme for Housing the Urban Poor (ISHUP) has been launched for providing interest subsidy on housing to urban poor to make the housing affordable and within the repaying capacity of Economically Weaker Sections (EWS)/ Low Income Group (LIG). The scheme encourages poor sections to avail of loan facilities through Commercial Banks/Housing Finance Companies for the purposes of construction/acquisition of houses and avail 5% subsidy in interest payment for loans upto Rs. 1 lakh.

Further, with a view to encourage allotment of land for EWS, under the newly launched Scheme of 'Affordable Housing in Partnership', Central Government assistance will be provided on a progressive scale *vis-a-vis* built up area earmarked for EWS/LIG as a percentage of total constructed area. The assistance would be available for the provision of civic services such as water supply including ground level/overhead service reservoirs, storm water drainage, solid waste management, sewerage including common sewerage treatment facilities, rain water harvesting, approach roads, electricity lines etc.

The newly announced scheme of Rajiv Awas Yojana (RAY) seeks to create a slum free India in partnership with States that are willing to assign property rights to people living in slum areas.

Discussion on state of National economy

*415. SHRI V. HANUMANTHA RAO:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Prime Minister called a meeting of the full Planning Commission to take stock of state of national economy in the backdrop of economic downturn and emerging drought situation due to monsoon failure;

(b) if so, whether reconstituted Planning Commission also discussed/reviewed the status of implementation of integrated energy policy;

(c) if so, the main points discussed;

(d) whether plan panel has considered ways to bring economy back on high growth trajectory considering these factors;

(e) whether the panel has also discussed revision in Eleventh Plan growth and sectoral targets; and

(f) if so, the outcome of discussions held?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PLANNING (SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. The first meeting of the newly constituted Full Planning Commission was held on 1st September 2009 under the Chairmanship of Hon'ble Prime Minister to discuss the State of the Economy and Assessment of Integrated Energy Policy for the country. The issues such as the deceleration in the growth rate in the Indian Economy on account of global slow down, negative growth rate in the agricultural sector during the current year due to drought, reduction in exports and status of implementation of Integrated Energy policy etc. were also deliberated.